

Causes of tension in europe in the early 20th century essay sample

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



Towards the end of the 19th century, the tension between the European countries had built up leading to a war involving the whole world, known as World War. Although, there were many factors which built up tension which eventually led to the war, the thing which applied the most tension to the European countries were the alliances between the major powers in Europe. This is because by dividing Europe into 2 different divisions, the divisions pressured each other just by existing and also increased rivalry.

One reason why the alliances had the most tension on Europe was because it created two big groups which had a strong sense of rivalry for each other. The Triple Alliance with Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary in 1882 was one of Otto von Bismarck, the German chancellor's accomplishments. The Triple Alliance was meant as a method to improve Germany's diplomatic relations with other countries. But when Kaiser Wilhelm came into power, he started saying and doing things that intimidated the other European countries. For example, he said 'Germany's place in the sun' which had sent a provocative message to the other countries. Soon the Dual Alliance was formed with France and Russia in 1894 and the Triple Entente with Britain, Russia and France was formed after the Anglo-French entente was signed and the Anglo-Russian Convention(1907). Now Europe was divided into two big powerful groups, and when there are two big groups there always is rivalry between these two groups. And rivalry causes conflicts and then leads to fighting.

Another reason why the alliances were the cause of having the most tension on Europe was that the rest of Europe was already afraid of Germany due to

its growth. But when the Triple Alliance was formed, it frightened the other European countries even more. Germany was formed after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Due to the fact that Germany had the largest army, the biggest economy and the biggest population, other countries started fearing that Germany might try to dominate Europe. Things were better when Otto von Bismarck had control of things but after he fell from power in 1890, Kaiser Wilhelm, who took over, started looking ambitious which increased the fear among the countries in Europe. And during this time the Triple Alliance was already formed for diplomatic purposes but the Kaiser made it look as though they were getting ready for a war. The growing country of Germany plus Austria-Hungary and Italy increased fear and tension and it pushed France, Britain and Russia to form an entente to defend themselves against the alliance.

Last but not least, the alliances built up the most tension because it made it easier for war to break out. With all the major powers of Europe in two different groups, a great war could have broken out if any of these countries were attacked. For example, if a country in the Triple Entente declared war on a country in the Triple Alliance, then all the countries in the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente would have to take part therefore leading to a world war. This actually happened when the July crisis occurred in 1914. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, which was Russia's ally, Russia started moving to defend Serbia, so Germany declared war on Russia and France and finally on the 4th of August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany, which led up to World War. This was the result feared by many people and

countries. They were scared of this chain reaction occurring. That is why the alliances built up the most tension.

In conclusion, the alliances had cause the most tension in Europe just before World War. This is because the alliances had divided Europe into two big groups and when there are two groups obviously some sort of rivalry occurs. The differences between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance had built up a lot of tension between the European countries and therefore led to a World War. The Morocco crisis of 1905-1906, the Bosnian crisis of 1908-1909, the Agadir crisis in 1911 and the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, were the few things that the alliances had brought. Although some people say that the Germany's growth or the Anglo-German Naval Race caused the most tension in Europe, I think that the alliances had caused the most tension in Europe because the alliances had divided Europe, made rivalry on a bigger extent and made it easier for wars with the major powers in Europe to occur.